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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 COLOMBO 002130

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
DCHA/OFDA GGOTTLIEB, MMARX, RTHAYER, BDEEMER
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
DCHA/FFP FOR LAUREN LANDIS
DCHA DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR WILLIAM GARVELINK
ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER
GENEVA FOR USAID KYLOH
ROME PASS FODAG
NSC FOR MELINE
CDR USPACOM FOR J3/J4/POLAD
USEU PASS USEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [AEMR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: TSUNAMI RELIEF IN SRI LANKA -- OFDA WRAP-UP AND
TRANSITION PERSPECTIVES

1. SUMMARY: USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR SRI LANKA
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE DECEMBER 2004 TSUNAMI DISASTER
WAS SPEARHEADED BY USAID/OFDA WITH THE IMMEDIATE
DEPLOYMENT OF A DART TEAM AND RAPID FUNDING OF A
PORTFOLIO OF EMERGENCY PROJECTS. NOW LARGELY COMPLETED,
THE PROJECTS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN SETTING THE FRAMEWORK
FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL RELIEF
EFFORT. AGAINST A DISASTER SCENARIO OF 35,322 DEAD,
516,150 DISPLACED, AND OVER A MILLION AFFECTED IN THE
COUNTRY'S COASTAL COMMUNITIES, THERE WERE NO DEATHS DUE
TO STARVATION, LACK OF MEDICAL CARE, OR EPIDEMICS. THE
GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA HAS REPORTED THAT THE MAJORITY OF
CHILDREN ARE BACK IN SCHOOL; AT LEAST HALF OF THE
TSUNAMI-DISPLACED POPULATION HAVE BEEN ACCOMMODATED IN

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MORE THAN 50,000 TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS (WHILE OTHERS HAVE
BEEN TAKEN IN BY RELATIVES); AND A COMBINATION OF SHORT-
TERM AND LONGER-TERM CASH AND EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS
HAVE ASSURED AT LEAST SOME INCOME TO THE FAMILIES OF THE
200,000 PERSONS WHO LOST THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

2. SUMMARY CONTINUED: AS THE FOCUS OF ASSISTANCE
PROJECTS AND GOVERNMENT PLANNING SHIFTS TO LONGER TERM
RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, A NUMBER OF PROGRAM
AND POLICY ISSUES ATTENDING THE TRANSITION CONTINUE TO
IMPEDE PROGRESS IN MAKING THE TRANSITION, MOST NOTABLY
THAT OF RELIEVING BUFFER ZONE RESTRICTIONS. RESOLUTION
OF THESE ISSUES WILL REQUIRE AN APPRECIATION OF THE
DIFFICULTIES AND FIXES ADOPTED IN THE PAST 11 MONTHS TO
ACHIEVE COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, DONORS,
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS
(NGOS). DISASTER PREPAREDNESS REMAINS AN OUTSTANDING
CHALLENGE FOR A COUNTRY THAT EXPERIENCES HUMANITARIAN
EMERGENCIES ON AN ALMOST ROUTINE BASIS. END SUMMARY.

3. OFDA RESPONSE: OFDA RESPONDED TO THE DEVASTATION OF
THE DECEMBER 26 TSUNAMI IN SRI LANKA WITH SAME DAY
FUNDING OF \$100,000, PROVIDED THROUGH THE USAID/SRI LANKA
MISSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE AMBASSADOR'S DISASTER
DECLARATION. THIS WAS FOLLOWED WITHIN 24 HOURS BY THE
ARRIVAL OF USAID/OFDA'S REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR SOUTH ASIA
TO INITIATE THE DEPLOYMENT OF A USAID DISASTER ASSISTANCE
RESPONSE TEAM (USAID/DART) THAT OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS
BROUGHT UP TO 25 EMERGENCY RELIEF EXPERTS INTO THE
COUNTRY AT A TIME. DART MEMBERS, INCLUDING TECHNICAL
SPECIALISTS, PROGRAM OFFICERS, INFORMATION OFFICERS,
MILITARY LIAISON OFFICERS, AND LOGISTICS OFFICERS,
CONDUCTED ASSESSMENTS OF AFFECTED AREAS, PARTICIPATED IN
THE OVERALL COORDINATION OF RELIEF ACTIVITIES, MONITORED
RELIEF COMMODITIES' DELIVERY AND DISTRIBUTION, AND MADE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DISASTER RELIEF
RESPONSE.

4. OFDA RESPONSE CONTINUED: USAID/OFDA FUNDING PROVIDED
BY THE DART WITHIN WEEKS OF THE DISASTER ULTIMATELY
TOTALLED \$36.5 MILLION AND ENGAGED OVER 20 INTERNATIONAL
AND NATIONAL AGENCIES IN RELIEF EFFORTS THAT RANGED FROM
IMMEDIATE RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS TO ADDRESSING SHORT-TERM
INCOME AND SHELTER NEEDS TO LONGER TERM SUPPORT FOR
LIVELIHOODS' RESTORATION PROGRAMS. AS OF DECEMBER 1,
2005, ALL BUT TWO OF THE DART-FUNDED ACTIVITIES WERE
COMPLETED. ALTHOUGH USAID GRANTS REQUIRE RESULTS
REPORTING ONLY ON A QUARTERLY BASIS, MOST OF THE AGENCIES
FUNDED BY THE DART AGREED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON A
MONTHLY BASIS USING A TWO-PAGE FORMAT TO TRACK OUTPUTS
AGAINST 17 INDICES OF PERFORMANCE. DRAWING FROM THAT
REPORTING, A MATRIX WAS DEVELOPED BY USAID MISSION AND
OFDA TDY STAFF TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF PARTNER
AGENCIES AS WELL AS TO IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE
OVERALL RELIEF PROGRAM. USAID/OFDA-FUNDED INTERVENTIONS

HAVE PRODUCED THE FOLLOWING CUMULATIVE RESULTS TO-DATE:
OVER 400,000 VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI RECEIVED VARIOUS
EMERGENCY SUPPLIES IN THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE
DISASTER; MORE THAN 250,000 BENEFITED FROM WATER AND
SANITATION PROJECTS; CLOSE TO USD 6.5 MILLION WENT INTO
CASH-FOR-WORK PROJECTS WHICH HELPED RESTORE THE LOCAL
ECONOMIES OF DEVASTATED COMMUNITIES THAT HAD LOST ALL
MEANS OF LIVELIHOODS AND DAILY COMMERCE; MORE THAN
200,000 PERSONS RECEIVED PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT OR ANTI-
TRAFFICKING INFORMATION; NEARLY 50,000 PEOPLE WERE
PROVIDED WITH TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS (TEMPORARY HOUSES
THAT MAY BE THEIR HOMES FOR TWO YEARS OR MORE); AND AS
MANY AS 40,000 FAMILIES WERE GIVEN NEW HOPE BECAUSE AT
LEAST ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD WAS PROVIDED WITH
TRAINING AND FINANCIAL OR COMMODITY SUPPORT TO GIVE THEM
THE MEANS TO EARN A REGULAR AND SUSTAINABLE INCOME.

15. OFDA RESPONSE CONTINUED: BEYOND ATTEMPTING TO
QUANTIFY THE IMPACT OF OFDA'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDING
OF RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN SRI LANKA, A QUALITATIVE
ASSESSMENT ALSO WOULD SUGGEST THAT DEPLOYMENT OF THE DART
ACCOMPLISHED A NUMBER OF OTHER OBJECTIVES. THESE
INCLUDED STAFFING AND COORDINATING CRITICAL NEEDS
ASSESSMENT MISSIONS TO TSUNAMI-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES, AND
PRIMING THE RELIEF RESPONSE PUMP BY QUICKLY IDENTIFYING
AND FUNDING EXPERIENCED AND CAPABLE RELIEF AGENCIES SO
THAT THEY COULD IMMEDIATELY COMMIT RESOURCES TO SETTING
UP THE CRITICAL PERSONNEL AND LOGISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
REQUIRED TO RENDER EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE. RELIEF AND
RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS GAINED THEIR INITIAL MOMENTUM AND
CREDIBILITY FROM A CORE GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL AND NON-
GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS ? MANY OF THEM MOBILIZED FOR
START-UP IN-COUNTRY BY THE DART. SUCH STRATEGIC
COORDINATION AND LEVERAGING OF FUNDS HAD A SIGNIFICANT
AND BENEFICIAL IMPACT UPON THE LONGER-TERM RELIEF EFFORT
IN SRI LANKA, FUNDED IN AMOUNTS ESTIMATED BETWEEN 1.7 AND
3.1 BILLION DOLLARS. WHILE THE SHEER MAGNITUDE OF THE
EVENTUAL INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE TSUNAMI
SIGNIFICANTLY COMPLICATED COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY
RELIEF, THESE CORE AGENCIES IN FACT DID WORK SUPPORTIVELY
WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS PRIVATE AID GROUPS
IN SRI LANKA.

16. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (SHELTER): AS GOVERNMENT AND
ASSISTANCE AGENCIES SEE THE RELIEF PHASE OF THE TSUNAMI
RESPONSE CLOSING OUT AND A TRANSITION TAKING PLACE TO
RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, SEVERAL ISSUES
FOR THE TRANSITION ARE BECOMING MORE APPARENT,
PARTICULARLY IN THE SHELTER, WATER/SANITATION, AND
LIVELIHOODS SECTORS. OF OVERARCHING SIGNIFICANCE, THE
POLICY ISSUE THAT WILL DOG RESOLUTION OF THESE CONCERNS
CONTINUES TO BE THE DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION OF
GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING BACK IN BUFFER ZONES. CLARITY OF
GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THIS AREA IS A CRITICAL DETERMINANT
FOR MOVING AHEAD NOT ONLY WITH PERMANENT HOME
CONSTRUCTION, BUT RELATED INVESTMENTS IN THE UTILITIES
INFRASTRUCTURE IN TSUNAMI-AFFECTED AREAS, AND MOST
IMPORTANT OF ALL, EFFECTIVELY FOCUSSED INTERVENTIONS FOR
THE RESTORATION OF LIVELIHOODS. IN SHELTER, CARE AND
MAINTENANCE OF TRANSITIONAL STRUCTURES ALSO LOOMS AS AN
INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT CHALLENGE, BOTH BECAUSE THEY MUST
WITHSTAND MONSOON CONDITIONS, AND BECAUSE THE PACE OF
PERMANENT HOME CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO RESULT IN MANY
OF THE DISPLACED FAMILIES HAVING TO REMAIN IN
TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS FOR TWO YEARS OR MORE. SOME OF THE
AGENCIES THAT ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED THE TEMPORARY
SHELTERS HAVE ALREADY DEPARTED THE COUNTRY, WHILE OTHERS
NO LONGER POSSESS FUNDS OR STAFF TO ADDRESS MAINTENANCE
ISSUES OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD. LEADERSHIP ON THIS AND
OTHER SHELTER RELATED ISSUES WILL HAVE TO SHIFT WITHIN
THE RELIEF COMMUNITY SINCE THE LEAD UN AGENCY FOR
COORDINATION OF TSUNAMI-RELATED SHELTER ASSISTANCE,
UNHCR, ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF NOVEMBER THAT IT WAS
DISCONTINUING ITS ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THESE PROGRAMS
AND WILL RETURN TO ITS LONG-STANDING MANDATE WHICH
INCLUDES ADDRESSING THE SHELTER ISSUES OF THE WAR-
AFFECTED DISPLACED POPULATION IN SRI LANKA. THE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), WHICH HAS
BEEN ACTIVE IN BUILDING TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS, NOW HAS
INDICATED THAT IT IS PREPARED TO TAKE UP A LEADERSHIP
ROLE FOR SHELTER CARE AND MAINTENANCE, ASSUMING FUNDING
AVAILABILITIES. ONE NGO, WORLD VISION, ALREADY HAS
FUNDED IOM FOR USD 500,000 TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE FOR
STRUCTURES THAT IT CONSTRUCTED FOR TSUNAMI DISPLACED. IOM
HAS PREPARED A USD 33 MILLION PROPOSAL FOR IT TO
EFFECTIVELY ASSUME A LARGER NATIONAL ROLE IN THIS AREA;
MAJOR DONORS ARE LIKELY TO BE INTERNATIONAL NGOS WHICH
STILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT TSUNAMI-SPECIFIC FUNDING IN THEIR
COFFERS. (NOTE: THE NGO COMMUNITY IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE
MORE THAN USD 400 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR PERMANENT HOUSING
CONSTRUCTION, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MANY OF THESE
ORGANIZATIONS ARE PREPARED TO FUND CARE AND MAINTENANCE
PROGRAMS FOR TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT
THEY HAVE NOT BUILT THEMSELVES. END NOTE)

17. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (WATER/SANITATION): A COLLATERAL

CONCERN WITH THE PHYSICAL MAINTENANCE OF TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS IS ENSURING THAT THE TEMPORARY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WATER AND SANITATION IS SUPPORTED AND UPGRADED WHEN NECESSARY. MANY SITES OF 10 SHELTERS OR MORE ARE STILL DEPENDENT ON POTABLE WATER TANKS, SERVICED BY WATER UTILITY OR NGO-SUPPLIED BOWSERS. FUNDING WILL HAVE TO BE BUDGETED FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS SERVICE. SIMILARLY, MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADE OF LATRINES AT THESE SITES MUST BE FUNDED, ORGANIZED AND OVERSEEN. UNICEF WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE FOR THE LATTER FUNCTION, AND HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM USAID, AMONG OTHER DONORS, TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS AREA. A BROAD SET OF CONCERNS, INCLUDING COHERENT PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS, HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY NGOS WITH FUNDING FOR PERMANENT HOUSING, ESPECIALLY AS THEY COME UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC TO ACCELERATE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PERMANENT COMMUNITIES. THE NGOS NOTE THAT SIMILAR PRESSURES TO EXPEDITE THE CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS EARLIER THIS YEAR LED TO BUILDING ON POORLY PLANNED AND SITED LOCATIONS THAT ARE NOW VULNERABLE TO FLOODING, AND IN SOME CASES TO ISOLATION FROM SERVICES OR LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES.

18. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (LIVELIHOODS): THE MOST INTRACTABLE PROBLEM AFFECTING THE TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO RECOVERY PHASES OF ASSISTANCE IS CLEARLY THAT OF SUPPORTING THE RESTORATION OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPORTED THAT AT LEAST EIGHT MINISTRIES AND OVER 100 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN FUNDING OF USD 126 MILLION FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES AS DIRECT CASH GRANTS, CASH FOR WORK, COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION, SKILLS TRAINING, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND MICRO-FINANCE, AT LEAST ONE-THIRD OF THE ESTIMATED 200,000 PEOPLE AFFECTED STILL DO NOT HAVE A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD. IN RECOGNITION OF THIS ISSUE, AN ONGOING USD 10 MILLION OFDA PROJECT WITH A U.S. CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE RECOVERY OF SMALL ENTERPRISES WILL PUT GREATER EMPHASIS IN COMING MONTHS UPON SKILLS TRAINING (E.G., FOR MASONS, CARPENTERS, WELDERS, ETC.) FOR THE UNEMPLOYED IN TSUNAMI AFFECTED COMMUNITIES WHERE USAID PLANS RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES THAT THEN CAN UTILIZE THEIR NEWLY LEARNED SKILLS. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, AN END OF YEAR REPORT DRAFTED BY THE TASK FORCE TO REBUILD THE NATION (TAFREN) HAS SUGGESTED THAT AN ACTUAL FUNDING GAP TO RESTORE LIVELIHOODS HAS NOT YET BEEN IDENTIFIED, BUT GOES ON TO OBSERVE THAT PERHAPS THE LARGEST CONCERN ABOUT FUNDING GAPS ARISES IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETS. THE THREAT OF SOME TSUNAMI AFFECTED FAMILIES MOVING PERMANENTLY INTO POVERTY CANNOT BE RULED OUT ENTIRELY. A PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE IS SEEN IN THE ABSENCE OF SYSTEMATIC INFORMATION ON BENEFICIARY NEEDS, INCLUDING BENEFICIARY LISTS, AND THE ABILITY TO MATCH ASSISTANCE RESOURCES WITH NEEDS. ACCORDINGLY, A CURRENTLY PLANNED IOM PROJECT WILL SUPPORT THE REGISTRATION OF APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION TSUNAMI AFFECTED PERSONS (VIA THE USE OF MOBILE REGISTRATION CENTERS) FOR ENTRY OF THE DATA INTO A NEW NATIONAL DATABASE CENTER. WITHOUT RESOLUTION OF BUFFER ZONE ISSUES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, HOWEVER, PROGRESS IN RESTORING LIVELIHOODS FOR THE POOREST MEMBERS OF THE TSUNAMI-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES WILL CONTINUE TO LAG. COMMENT: AT THIS TIME USAID DOES NOT IDENTIFY A FUNDING GAP RELATED TO LIVELIHOOD RESTORATION. END COMMENT.

19. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (COORDINATION): COORDINATION OF THE DISASTER RESPONSE EFFORT HAS POSED AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT AND FORMAL ASSISTANCE AGENCIES ALIKE AS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GENEROSITY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TSUNAMI INDUCED A CORRESPONDENT INUNDATION OF FUNDS AND COMMODITIES UNDER THE CONTROL OF SCORES OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS. NOT ALL WERE EXPERIENCED IN EMERGENCY RELIEF OPERATIONS AND IN SOME CASES WERE LITTLE MORE THAN DUMP AND RUN OPERATIONS THAT RESISTED ANY EFFORT TO PRIORITIZE OR MATCH ASSISTANCE WITH ASSESSED NEEDS. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF ON-THE-GROUND COORDINATION TYPICALLY POSSESSED LIMITED EXPERIENCE OR CAPACITY FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT ON SUCH A SCALE AND WERE FREQUENTLY OVERWHELMED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. NEVERTHELESS, OVER TIME AND WITH ASSISTANCE FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE NGO STAFF MOST LOCAL AUTHORITIES DID SUCCEED IN BRINGING GREATER DISCIPLINE AND IMPROVED MANAGEMENT TO THE PROVISION OF AID IN THEIR DISTRICTS, DIVISIONS, AND VILLAGES.

10. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (COORDINATION CONTINUED): AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, SEVERAL GENERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND STAFF HAVE SOUGHT TO FRAME GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, CHANNEL INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE, AND WORK OUT EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE OR COORDINATION ROLES WITH LINE MINISTRIES AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS. AN INITIALLY ESTABLISHED CENTRE FOR NATIONAL OPERATIONS (CNO) GAVE WAY WITHIN SEVERAL WEEKS TO A SERIES OF TASK FORCES INCLUDING THE TASK FORCE FOR RELIEF (TAFOR) AND THE TASK FORCE TO REBUILD THE NATION (TAFREN). DESPITE THE SUCCESS OF THESE

TASK FORCES IN SEVERAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROVISION OF AN ACTIVE POINT OF CONTACT WITH INTERNATIONAL DONORS, AS WELL AS DEVELOPING A PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION FRAMEWORK, TSUNAMI-RELATED DECISION MAKING CAME TO A STANDSTILL ONCE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS ANNOUNCED. IN CONSEQUENCE, TAFREN COULD NOT BRING CLARITY TO THE POLICYMAKING PROCESS OR CLEARLY COMMUNICATE POLICY DECISIONS TO GOVERNMENT AND RELIEF OFFICIALS WITH OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE GROUND REGARDING SUCH CRITICAL TRANSITION ISSUES AS THE DETERMINATION OF BUFFER ZONE RESTRICTIONS. OF FURTHER CONCERN AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, IS THE PREDICTED SHEDDING OF KEY STAFF FROM THE TASK FORCES AND THE ACCOMPANYING LOSS OF INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT RELATING TO WHAT HAS CLEARLY BECOME A MASSIVE AND INEVITABLY COMPLEX RELIEF-TO-RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS. THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGING THAT PROCESS NOW FALLS TO A NEW RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY(RDA), WHICH WILL BE PRESSED TO BECOME FULLY OPERATIONAL QUICKLY AND TO ACHIEVE QUICK RESOLUTION OF BUFFER ZONE ISSUES.

11. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (COORDINATION CONTINUED): DATA FOR RELIEF COORDINATION HAS BEEN EXTENSIVELY GATHERED, BUT NOT NECESSARILY PASSED ON OR ADEQUATELY ARCHIVED FOR SUCCEEDING INSTITUTIONS, A FAILING PREVIOUSLY NOTED IN THE TRANSITION OF GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES FROM CNO TO TAFREN. THE GOVERNMENT'S DONOR ASSISTANCE DATABASE (DAD) DEVELOPED SINCE THEN HAS A SOPHISTICATED ARCHITECTURE THAT PERMITS TRACKING OF DONOR ASSISTANCE, CALCULATED AT OVER USD 1.7 BILLION AT THIS TIME (AND BY SOME ESTIMATES AT OVER USD 3.1 BILLION), BUT IT STILL HAS OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE WORKED OUT (E.G., SERVER CAPACITY) AND ITS FUTURE CARE AND MAINTENANCE IS UNCERTAIN IN THE POST-ELECTION DISSOLUTION OF TAFREN. A STRONG ARGUMENT MAY BE HEARD FOR TURNING OVER DAD MANAGEMENT TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, A NATURAL HOME FOR ITS FUNCTION IN RECORDING DONOR PLEDGES AND ACTUAL COMMITMENTS; ADDITIONALLY, SUCCESS OF THE DAD IS ULTIMATELY MOST LIKELY TO DEPEND ON THE ABILITY TO DISCIPLINE DONOR AND NGO REPORTING. HOWEVER, THE DAD'S RELEVANCE AND UTILITY AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR RELIEF PLANNING PURPOSES COULD DIMINISH OVER TIME IF IT'S PRIMARY PURPOSE BECOMES THAT OF FISCAL RECORD KEEPING. THE OTHER MAJOR RELIEF INFORMATION RESOURCE SPECIFIC TO SRI LANKA WITH FUNCTIONAL UTILITY FOR COORDINATION PURPOSES IS OPERATED BY OCHA'S HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION CENTER (HIC). A NUMBER OF WEBSITES DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED BY THE HIC OFFER EASY ACCESS TO UPDATED INCIDENT AND RESOURCE INFORMATION BY LOCALITIES. THE FUTURE OF THESE WEBSITES IS UNCERTAIN, GIVEN OCHA CLOSE-OUT PLANS FOR MID-2006.

12. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (COORDINATION CONTINUED): THE ROLE OF UN AGENCIES IN COORDINATION HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR AS IT HAS DEPENDED, PARTICULARLY AT THE FIELD LEVEL WHERE COORDINATION HAS BEEN MOST CRITICAL, ON THE PERSONALITIES AND ENERGY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS THOSE OF UN STAFF. UNHCR, FOR EXAMPLE WAS GENERALLY SEEN AS PROACTIVE AND VIGOROUS IN TAKING THE LEAD ROLE IN ASSISTING LOCAL OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATING SHELTER AID. HOWEVER, THE AGENCY'S EFFECTIVENESS VARIED FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT, AND FREQUENTLY FAILED TO CLARIFY OR RATIONALIZE THE INSTRUCTIONS OR GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO NGOS WORKING IN THIS SECTOR. ALTHOUGH REGARDED AS A RELATIVELY WEAK ORGANIZATION, ESPECIALLY AT THE OUTSET OF THE TSUNAMI RELIEF OPERATIONS, OCHA NOW MAY SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT LYNCHPIN FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN PRIVATE AGENCIES AND THE GOVERNMENT, GIVEN TAFREN'S DISAPPEARANCE AND NGO UNCERTAINTIES WITH RESPECT TO REPORTING PROTOCOLS AND POSSIBLE NEW IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, AS NOTED ABOVE, OCHA PRESENTLY IS OPERATING ON THE PREMISE THAT IT WILL CLOSE DOWN AT SOME POINT IN THE NEXT YEAR. UNDP CAN BE EXPECTED TO NOMINALLY ASSUME OCHA'S FUNCTIONS WITHIN ITS MORE TRADITIONAL COORDINATING ROLE AS THE SENIOR AGENCY IN THE UN COUNTRY TEAM, ALBEIT WITH A PREFERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OVER HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES.

13. TRANSITIONAL ISSUES (COORDINATION CONTINUED): DONOR AND NGO COORDINATION FORA APPEAR TO ABOUND IN COLOMBO, AND ARE STILL FUNCTIONING FOR SECTOR COOPERATION PURPOSES IN THE FIELD. HOWEVER, MOST CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE TO SERVE AS SUBSTANTIVE COORDINATION MECHANISMS, RATHER THAN AS OCCASIONS FOR LONG-WINDED ATTEMPTS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION. MANY OF THE MAJOR PRIVATE RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS FORSOOK THESE MEETINGS SHORTLY AFTER THEY BEGAN BECAUSE THEY YIELDED SO LITTLE IN THE WAY OF ACTIONABLE DECISIONS AND REQUIRED INORDINATELY LARGE SWATHES OF TIME WHICH HARD PRESSED RELIEF MANAGERS COULD ILL AFFORD. NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE KEY ISSUES ON THE AGENDA OF THESE GROUPS AT THIS TIME. AMONG THOSE IS THE EQUITY ISSUE IN THE CONTINUED PROGRAMMING OF MUCH LARGER VOLUMES OF DONOR AID TO TSUNAMI VICTIMS THAN TO THE WAR AFFECTED POPULATIONS, AND THE PREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES IN

HEIGHTENED INTRA-COMMUNITY TENSIONS AMONG VULNERABLE AND POLITICALLY VOLATILE COMMUNITIES. ANOTHER FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED CONCERN IS THAT OF INFLATED LABOR AND MATERIEL COSTS FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WHICH ARE NOW PROJECTED TO REQUIRE AS MUCH AS FOUR TIMES THE FUNDING ESTIMATED PRIOR TO THE TSUNAMI.

14. PREPAREDNESS: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE MANAGEMENT REMAIN CRITICAL CONCERNS OF GOVERNMENT AND RELIEF AGENCIES. WITH A HISTORY OF FREQUENTLY OCCURRING FLOODS, CYCLONES, AND LANDSLIDES, SRI LANKA IS STILL WITHOUT A FULLY MANDATED AND STAFFED CENTRAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY, ALTHOUGH TWO ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT APPEAR TO BE TITLED AS SUCH. THE LIKELY LEAD AGENCY WILL BE THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTER HEADED BY MAJOR GENERAL GAMINI HETTIARACHCHI IN A NEWLY DESIGNATED MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT. ALTHOUGH SET UP IN SEPTEMBER AS PART OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT, ELECTION-RELATED DELAYS IN AUTHORIZING THE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF HAVE SLOWED ITS ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL DISASTER ALERT AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM. USG ASSISTANCE IS BEING PROVIDED TO THE CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM AND DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES VIA FUNDING THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM (IOTWS). USAID/SRI LANKA STAFF MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE IOTWS PROJECT, AND WILL PROVIDE CONTINUING LIAISON BETWEEN THE GOSL AND THE PROJECT'S PROGRAM MANAGERS IN BANGKOK.

15. END NOTE: OFDA HAS MAINTAINED A TDY MONITORING PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA FOR MUCH OF THE TIME SINCE THE DART OPERATIONAL GROUP WAS DISBANDED IN LATE FEBRUARY. WHILE OFDA'S IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE WILL EFFECTIVELY END WITH THE DEPARTURE OF A LONG-TERM TDYER MID-DECEMBER, REGIONAL OFDA OFFICERS IN KATHMANDU AND BANGKOK WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE BACKSTOP SERVICES FOR SRI LANKA. OFDA HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY FORTUNATE IN THE STRONG SUPPORT IT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE EMBASSY, FROM TOP MANAGEMENT ON DOWN, AND IN THE EXCEPTIONAL COOPERATION OF THE USAID MISSION IN IMPLEMENTING THE EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM. SPECIAL MENTIONS NEED TO BE MADE OF THE OTI STAFF AND THE STAFF OF THEIR IMPLEMENTING PARTNER (DAI) FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT ON THE GROUND; AND TO THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE STAFF OF THE MISSION FOR TAKING ON COGNIZANT TECHNICAL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MULTIPLE GRANTS MADE BY THE DART TO OFDA'S NGO PARTNERS. THE OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMITMENT OF THESE INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY OF TIMELY AND CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA'S TSUNAMI VICTIMS.

CHARGE